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MR. PASSWATER: Good afternoon. My name is Alan Passwater. I am manager of Corporate Nuclear Services for AmerenUE. AmerenUE is the largest electric utility in Missouri. It supplies electric service to customers in its service territories in Missouri and Illinois to more than 2,800,000 people in 65 Missouri counties and 500 towns and four Illinois counties, including the greater St. Louis area. AmerenUE also owns and operates the Callaway Nuclear Plant located in central Missouri.

1 First, I want to applaud DOE for their progress towards licensing Yucca Mountain Waste Facility as evidenced by completing this Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Any progress toward this societal benefit is welcome indeed, even if it's long in coming.

Furthermore, we encourage the federal government to continue progress toward meeting its legal obligation to our customers to begin moving used nuclear fuel to a central disposal facility. Electricity customers across the country have committed over \$16 billion for this purpose. AmerenUE customers alone have contributed over \$117 million. By the Department of Energy's own estimates, action by the federal government has already slipped at least 12 years past the 1998 contract date for spent fuel acceptance which was a requirement of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

2 Second, AmerenUE agrees with the conclusion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that opening a repository at Yucca Mountain would be far safer and more cost effective than leaving used fuel and high-level waste at 72 nuclear power plant sites and five Department of Energy sites in a 36 -- in 36 states across the country. Building a repository at Yucca Mountain is the environmentally responsible thing to do, as shown in the EIS. This draft EIS further builds on the record of scientific evidence contained in the 1998 Viability Assessment supporting this conclusion.

AmerenUE, along with other nuclear utilities, needs the repository at Yucca Mountain. Opening the repository represents good public policy and DOE should continue progress and avoid any further delays. On Behalf of AmerenUE, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on DOE's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Yucca Mountain. Thank you.